

This is a ripoff that is too obvious even for the Bush administration to ignore, and it is time for Congress to stand up on our hind legs and force this administration to take action. The people in Snohomish County deserve their hundreds of millions of dollars back, and we are going to see to it that they get it.

#### AARP AND THE DRUG BILL

(Mr. McDERMOTT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. McDERMOTT. Mr. Speaker, AARP owes every senior an explanation. Its leader trumpeted a Republican prescription drug bill passed in the dead of night last year. It would have been dead on arrival if the administration had told the truth, but they did not.

But the seniors, including my 94-year-old mother, are really smart. So AARP, when they sent out 26,000 packets of information, only 400 signed up.

My mother and her buddies are pretty darn smart. They know the difference between a real deal and a raw deal. The administration gave seniors a raw deal, and AARP leadership helped.

Senator KERRY will give seniors a real deal with real benefits for prescription drugs.

□ 1100

Democrats are ready to do what is right, beginning with telling the truth.

It is time AARP repudiated the reckless endorsement of a Republican bill that is bad medicine for seniors. It is time for AARP to take the medicine every mother teaches her child: tell the truth and take responsibility when you do something stupid.

#### BUSH TAX CUTS CAUSE LARGEST DEFICIT IN NATION'S HISTORY

(Mr. ROSS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, in my home State of Arkansas, nearly 75,000 people are out of work today. Unemployment has increased by 19 percent in the last 3½ years.

However, our Nation's Treasury Secretary John Snow is visiting Arkansas today to talk about how President Bush's tax policy reforms are actually creating jobs in Arkansas. All the President's tax cuts for the wealthy have given us is the largest deficit ever in our Nation's history, tax cuts that our children will be forced to pay.

For Secretary Snow to come to Arkansas today and tell Arkansans the administration's economic plan is creating jobs shows a blatant disregard for what Arkansas families are really facing. Working families do not need more rhetoric; they need jobs, they need affordable health care, they need a real Medicare prescription drug plan and,

yes, they need lower gasoline prices, all things this administration has failed to do.

#### ALLOWING SENIORS ACCESS TO DRUG REIMPORTATION

(Mr. SANDLIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SANDLIN. Mr. Speaker, the new drug discount card is nothing more than the old bait and switch. The Republican leadership continues to try to trick our seniors into thinking they are getting a Medicare prescription drug benefit, while in reality offering nothing more than an 18-month sham program that fails to offer any significant savings to seniors. Not surprisingly, this temporary program prioritizes the pharmaceutical companies' profit over the health care expenses of our Nation's seniors.

While the administration has claimed that these cards will have savings ranging from 10 percent to 25 percent, there is no guarantee of this; and there is absolutely no control over the prices charged.

Additionally, the drug companies determine what drugs to discount and how much seniors pay. And while seniors are locked into a drug card for a full year, the drug companies are at liberty to change what discounts they offer from week to week. As a matter of fact, some have already changed their drug prices so that it does not cut into their bottom line.

The truth is that a better solution with real benefits is available. With drug costs increasing at 3.5 times the rate of inflation, we owe it to our Nation's seniors to finally allow them access to drug reimportation.

It is time to do the right thing and offer real savings to our seniors. We cannot afford not to do so.

#### 2006 BUDGET CUTS

(Mr. EMANUEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EMANUEL. Mr. Speaker, last week we learned from an internal Bush administration budget memo detailing their planned cuts.

According to the budget document, education, transportation, Social Security, the Environmental Protection Agency, National Science Foundation, and the Small Business Administration are all in line for drastic cuts in their budgets. Head Start, for example, a \$177 million cut. The National Institutes of Health would be slashed by more than \$600 million. The administration is planning cuts for 2006; and all the while, they are asking for an additional \$25 billion to rebuild and secure Iraq. The additional \$25 billion for Iraq is on top of the \$165 billion the American taxpayers have already allocated and paid.

These reconstruction funds are building schools, roads, and encouraging business development in Iraq; and all the while, we are making corresponding cuts here at home. I understand that we need to rebuild Iraq and Afghanistan, but not at the expense of what we do here in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, when President Bush in 2000 declared his opposition to nation-building, who knew it was America he was talking about.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF INFORMING SENIORS ABOUT MEDICARE PRESCRIPTION DRUG BENEFIT

(Mr. PENCE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PENCE. Mr. Speaker, as many know, for deeply held philosophical reasons, I opposed the creation of a prescription drug entitlement in Medicare. But I never opposed helping low-income seniors or using the private sector to give seniors more buying power to save money on their prescription drugs, which is exactly what became available this week with the new Medicare drug discount card and the \$600 credit for low-income seniors. In fact, I hosted five Medicare discount drug fairs across my district, speaking to more than 1,000 of my constituents.

While many have made speeches on this floor and across the country creating anxiety about this new bill, I found it instructive to spend time with seniors. Despite my opposition to a drug entitlement, I felt I had a moral obligation to explain to seniors, particularly low-income seniors, what is available as of this week in the new Medicare drug discount card benefit.

I urge all of my colleagues, regardless of your view of this legislation, to view what is available in this law and to discharge your duty to your constituents to make knowledge available of the new drug discount card and the low-income assistance for seniors.

#### BACK TO WORK INCENTIVE ACT OF 2003

Mr. BOEHNER. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 656, I call up the bill (H.R. 444) to amend the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 to establish a Personal Reemployment Accounts grant program to assist Americans in returning to work, and ask for its immediate consideration in the House.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SIMPSON). Pursuant to House Resolution 656, the bill is considered read for amendment.

The text of H.R. 444 is as follows:

H.R. 444

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE

This Act may be cited as the "Back to Work Incentive Act of 2003".